

# The History Of The Holocaust

When reflecting on the Holocaust it is vital not to remember it as just a statistic, but acknowledge the individual lives and stories of all 6 million Jews murdered throughout its existence. It is also important to understand that the Holocaust was not just Auschwitz, it was the congregation and murder of Jewish people all over Europe. One individual story is that of Jakob Blankitny, a survivor of Auschwitz. Upon arrival Jakob was separated from his parents, who both immediately got sent to the gas chambers. He recalled witnessing the smoke rising from the crematoria, an image that stayed with him for the rest of his life. This highlighted the haunting and brutal experience of the Holocaust.



Before the Holocaust Jews lived normal everyday lives, with times of happiness and struggle. Approximately 9.5 million Jews lived throughout the continent prior to 1933, when Hitler came to power in Germany. These communities were rich in culture and tradition, some heavily devoted to their religion while others were more secular. They worked as teachers, tailors, shopkeepers, and professionals, while children attended school and participated in everyday life. This thriving reality were annihilated by the cruelty of the holocaust, Jews were stripped of their rights and forced into ghettos, concentration camps or hiding. Whole communities were destroyed, such as Jakobs hometown of Maków Mazowiecki where 4000 jews once lived, only 42 returned.



For survivors, liberation did not mean a return to normal life. Many discovered that their families had been murdered and their homes destroyed. Between 1945 and 1952, over 250,000 Jewish displaced persons lived in camps and urban centres across Germany, Austria, and Italy. The Holocaust remains deeply relevant today. It serves as a powerful warning of what can happen when hatred, racism, and antisemitism are normalised.

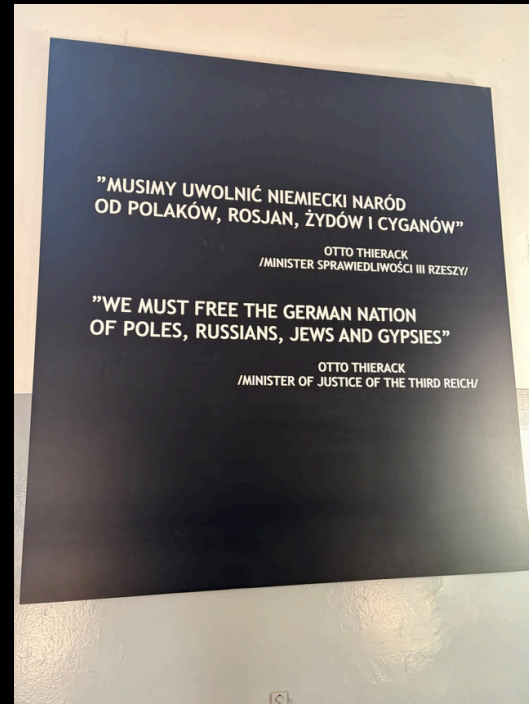




Walking through the Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial Museum images were shown of what Jewish life was like upon entry to the camps. For example the image to the left, of the arrival of Jew's from Hungary. Moments after this image, those who exited the train would be separated into two groups; prisoners who were now forced into work and those who would be exterminated.



These two images are examples of Nazi Propaganda. "The Nazis effectively used propaganda to win the support of millions of Germans in a democracy and, later in a dictatorship, to facilitate persecution, war, and ultimately genocide. The stereotypes and images found in Nazi propaganda were not new, but were already familiar to their intended audience." - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



The book of names was one of the most emotionally moving aspects of Auschwitz as it lists the inconceivable number of Holocaust victims, displaying their names, dates of birth, hometowns and places of death. The book is estimated to contain 4.8 million people, showing the sheer level of lives lost during this saddening event. The end of the book also contains empty pages, which stands a symbol of all the names and information of the victims who have not yet been discovered. The book also represents that the Nazi's attempts to erase all Jewish identities, did not and will never come true, as this is a permanent monument.